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INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE  
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//JF/UNMA//  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J3//  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RHMFIUU/COMSOCCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2657  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2801  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 6110  
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 1482

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 002976

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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: PRT/QALAT - DRUG SITUATION IN ZABUL: RECORD  
SEIZURES ON THE RING ROAD; POPPY PRODUCTION STILL  
SMALL BUT INCREASING

KABUL 00002976 001.2 OF 002

¶1. Summary: The ANP have seized over 18,000 kilograms of drugs in the past 14 months, primarily along the Ring Road linking Kandahar to Kabul. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) expects the local poppy cultivation, although small, will increase more than 50% this year. End Summary.

SEIZURES

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¶2. Zabul Province is located along the Ring Road connecting the capital Kabul with the country's second most important city, Kandahar. The former Provincial Chief of Police (CoP), Gen. Nabi (who had been the former Afghan Highway Patrol commander from Kandahar to Ghazni, and is now the Helmand Provincial CoP) aggressively hunted for vehicles transporting drugs from Kandahar to Kabul (occasionally drugs are seized going in the opposite direction). From the beginning of the previous year in the Islamic calendar until his departure, about 14 months, the ANP in Zabul had seized approximately 18,000 kg of drugs. The new CoP, Gen. Nur Mohammed Paktin has been in office less than a month, but his police have had five major drug seizures, including 404 kg of opium on 28 June (the total of opium seized nationwide from 1 January to 1 July is 12,246

kg).

#### SOURCES OF FRICTION WITH KABUL

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13. (SBU) The Zabul police complain that they do not receive funding commensurate with the amount of drugs that they seize. They point out that additional funding could be used to pay rewards to informants, obtain better search equipment and hire more officers to assist in searches. Vehicle searches, especially those requiring dismantling of vehicles, are very time-consuming and labor-intensive.

14. (SBU) The Zabul police also complain that the rules regarding forfeiture of vehicles involved in transporting drugs are not clear. Often, the owner will claim the driver was smuggling drugs without his permission, and the vehicle will be released to the owner. Both these issues will be raised at the provincial justice conference, which has been postponed several times.

#### GROWING PAINS WITH THE NEW LAW

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15. (SBU) Since January, a new law has required that the suspects and seized drugs be sent to Kabul in cases involving more than 2 kg of heroin, 5 kg of opium, or 50 kg of hashish. In the first case in Zabul under this law, the Ministry of the Interior did a poor job coordinating with the Chief of Police, expecting the PRT and DEA to make most of the arrangements for them. Chief Nabi was very

KABUL 00002976 002.2 OF 002

concerned about the MoI representatives stealing the drugs themselves, until he was advised that they would be escorted by US DEA agents. The MoI subsequently determined that it could fulfill its obligation by obtaining a sample from each seizure (for forensic testing). Transfers to Kabul have now become routine. The case file, suspects and samples are sent to Kabul and the remainder of each large seizure is burned locally.

#### AMBIVALENCE TO NEW SPECIAL NARCOTICS COURT

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16. (SBU) More than half of the felony-type cases tried in Zabul are still drug cases. The Director of Prosecutors opines that they should all be tried locally, not in Kabul. The Director of Courts doesn't think it matters, as the problem is high level GoA officials involved in the drug business. The PRT MoI Liaison officer, however, believes it is a good idea to try major drug cases in Kabul, so that local officials are not threatened.

#### PRODUCTION STILL SMALL, BUT INCREASING

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17. Zabul is a major transit point, but not a big poppy growing province. According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in 2005, Zabul produced 2,053 hectares of poppies, out of the 103,907 hectares grown nation-wide. However, in 2006, UNODC expects an overall increase in excess of 50%.

18. (SBU) Anecdotally, PRT members have seen poppy fields in all districts, including here in Qalat. During a visit to Nabahar District, locals complained to PRT members that the Government had promised assistance in return for not growing poppies, but had received none of the promised

assistance.

¶9. (SBU) Governor Arman has also expressed his frustration that no funding had been provided to Zabul Province by the GoA to discourage poppy production, despite large amounts of funding for neighboring Kandahar Province. He reported that 303 hectares had been eradicated this year.

COMMENT

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¶10. (SBU) Gen. Paktin is preoccupied with the security situation, but is still trying to actively interdict drug traffickers. Zabul now has a Director of Counter Narcotics, but he has only been in office for several weeks. We anticipate Zabul will remain a leader in terms of the amount of drugs seized.

NEUMANN